



## **NJDOE News**

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### **State Board Recognizes June Student of the Month**

The New Jersey State Board of Education today recognized Asja Culpepper, of Vernon Township High School in Sussex County, as the student of the month for June 2003.

Asja, a member of the class of 2003, was selected as the student of the month, in part, for an essay she wrote and delivered about veterans of foreign wars. A list of her activities include having participated in the 2002 New Jersey Girls State Convention and serving as a state "Legion Senator" at the 2002 Girls National Convention in Washington, D.C.

"Ms. Culpepper represents all Vernon students extremely well," wrote Barry Worman, the Sussex County Superintendent, in his recommendation letter. Asja has been awarded a scholarship for Skidmore College, where she plans on majoring in political science and attending in the fall, according to school officials.

The State Board honored Asja at its regular monthly meeting today in Trenton as part of its ongoing monthly program that recognizes a student or group of students for accomplishments in community service, the arts, academics and sports.

"The State Board of Education is proud to recognize Asja Culpepper as a wonderful example of what our students should aspire to be," Board President Maud Dahme said. "We are impressed with her all-around persona and her dedication to leadership and her school peers. We are sure that Ms. Culpepper will take these wonderful attributes and only enhance them in the future."

"The state Department of Education is proud to join the State Board in honoring this impressive young woman," Commissioner of Education William L. Librera said. "We are encouraged by Asja's commitment to continue her education at Skidmore College and we are confident that her maturity and her dedication will take her far."

In her essay on veterans of foreign wars, Asja focused on her grandfather. She wrote about the hardships he faced to ensure freedom for future generations. She also wrote about her obligation to continue her education and to "set the bar higher than ever."

"By the age of 17 he was in the army, fighting for a freedom he had not yet felt," Asja wrote about her grandfather. "By the age of 24, he had learned many lessons: only the strong survive, the flesh is a temple, and life must go on."

"He carried the weight of my future generation over his head," she wrote. "I am living proof that my granddaddy did it, that my father followed in his footsteps. Some who only knew the fragments of freedom, and others who obligated themselves to the struggles, hardships, pains and sufferings knew that one day there would be a generation that was free."